

Howard County Consumer Affairs Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes for June 3, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm the President

- Present: Richard Green, Katherine Bronstein, Sue Rogan, Felicia West & Jerome Jackson
- Absent: Ashlyn Hood, Jill Bussey

Minutes of the May 6, 2015 meeting were approved as read.

Administrator's Report

Becky provided the Board with a summary of OCA's partnership with the Korean Society of MD – ads will start that week and the column on OCA's services will run later in the month. Becky also let the Board know that the County Executive is considering a couple of options for the reorganization of Citizen Services and that she will keep the Board advised.

Budget Discussion

Becky provided the Board with samples of another stylus pen and seeded money that could have OCA info printed on it. The Board thought that while the seeded money was a clever idea, if the recipient planted it as intended, s/he would no longer have the OCA info. The Board voted unanimously to use its 2015 budget of \$500 for the purchase of 1300 stylus pens (presented at the May meeting) with the information "Read Before You Sign – Howard County Office of Consumer Affairs – 410-313-6420" printed on them.

Discussion of Advisory Board Project

The Board continued its discussion of ideas for an event or project that would coincide with National Consumer Protection Week next March or another event at which OCA plays a prominent role.

No new suggestions were made so the Board discussed topics that were raised last month and reached on consensus to do something related to student loan debt. The next step will be for board members to gather information about what other local, state and federal agencies, education institutions and non-profits are doing and then choose a narrower topic to focus on. For example, the Board may want to focus on private student loans, loans to attend for-profit schools, comparing future debt to potential future income, etc.

The Board agreed that the members need to also think about who the audience is (high school kids and parents, young adults who are working and now want to go to school, etc.), what message it wants to leave with the audience, whether there is a "deliverable" (such as tool kit) it wants to produce and who the best partners would be to work with. Board members present agreed to reach out to current and former County Council members, HCPSS, HCC, the CFPB, MD AG, MD Higher Education Commission and journalists to get feedback on what they are doing to educate the public on student loans or what information they think is most critical for students and parents to have.

In preparation for further discussion at the next meeting, Board members agreed to make the following contacts:

Sue – Calvin Ball

Katherine – appropriate contact at HCC

Felicia – contact at the CFPB

Richard – Courtney Watson

Becky will ask Jill if she will contact Ellen Flynn Giles to find the right contact in the HCPSS and will also talk with a friend who is a reporter with the Chronical of Higher Education and has moderated a number of panels involving student loans/debt.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD WILL BE ON JULY 1 AT 7:00 P.M.
OFFICE OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS CONFERENCE ROOM
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